



Public health nurses' knowledge and attitudes regarding climate change

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Abstract:

Background: Climate change affects human health, and health departments are urged to act to reduce the severity of these impacts. Yet little is known about the perspective of public health nurses-the largest component of the public health workforce-regarding their roles in addressing health impacts of climate change. **O b jectives:** We determined the knowledge and attitudes of public health nurses concerning climate change and the role of public health nursing in divisions of health departments in addressing health-related impacts of climate change. Differences by demographic subgroups were explored. **Methods:** An online survey was distributed to nursing directors of U.S. health departments (n Euro Surveillance (Bulletin European Sur Les Maladies Transmissibles; European Communicable Disease Bulletin) 786) with Internet staff directories. **Results:** Respondents (n Euro Surveillance (Bulletin European Sur Les Maladies Transmissibles; European Communicable Disease Bulletin) 176) were primarily female, white public health nursing administrators with ≥ 5 years of experience. Approximately equal percentages of respondents self-identified as having moderate, conservative, and liberal political views. Most agreed that the earth has experienced climate change and that climate change is somewhat controllable. Respondents identified an average of 5 of the 12 listed health-related impacts of climate change, but the modal response was zero impact. Public health nursing was perceived as having responsibility to address health-related impacts of climate change but lacking the ability to address these impacts. **C onclusions:** Public health nurses view the environment as under threat and see a role for nursing divisions in addressing health effects of climate change. However, they recognize the limited resources and personnel available to devote to this endeavor.

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Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Health Professional



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Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Air Pollution, Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Quality, Food/Water Quality, Food/Water Security, Food/Water Security, Human Conflict/Displacement, Human Conflict/Displacement, Sea Level Rise, Temperature

Air Pollution: Allergens

Extreme Weather Event: Drought, Flooding

Food/Water Quality: Biotoxin/Algal Bloom, Chemical

Food/Water Security: Food Access/Distribution, Nutritional Quality

Temperature: Extreme Cold, Extreme Heat

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Urban

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Infectious Disease, Mental Health/Stress

Infectious Disease: Foodborne/Waterborne Disease, General Infectious Disease, Vectorborne Disease

Foodborne/Waterborne Disease: General Foodborne/Waterborne Disease

Vectorborne Disease: General Vectorborne

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Other Mental Disorder

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

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populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children, Elderly, Low Socioeconomic Status

Other Vulnerable Population: Pre-existing medical conditions

Resource Type: 

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: 

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified